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ABSTRACT

The use of environmental scanning by three colleges at Northern Arizona University is discussed. The environment confronting each college is described, along with the process that was used to direct change to improve the efficient use of human and fiscal resources. The process involved: scanning the internal and external environments, establishing goals and a time frame, involving the maximum number of positive participants, building consensus within the unit and externally for the new direction, and implementing change. At the University, three colleges adapted in different ways to what would be viewed from central administration as a single environment. The College of Creative and Communication Arts is a unique organizational structure that includes personal and public communication, telecommunication, and journalism in a single academic unit. The College of Design and Technology is a new academic unit that evolved from the School of Applied Sciences when the environment shifted and the educational mission grew. The College's mission and organization was modified to blend technological areas with teacher education. The Center for Excellence in Education is designed to improve teacher education and the effectiveness of public schools. (SW)

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STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE ONE COLLEGE AT A TIME: A THEME WITH THREE VARIATIONS

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STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE ONE COLLEGE AT A TIME:

A THEME WITH THREE VARIATIONS

There is no more over-used word in the literature of higher education than "change." It has become the buzz word of the 1970's and 80's. The panacea for all problems, and the last resort when all else fails. Our experience over the last several years has been that, in spite of the general debasing of the coin, institutions have been far too goal-oriented in seeking change and too often fail to recognize that the process may, in the long run, be more important than the visible outcome.

Our presentation will attempt to make several key points, the most important of which is that coming to understand the strategies of institutional change requires study, familiarity with theory usually associated more with the private sector, and willingness to spend hundreds of hours attending to all of the many publics that influence the institution and in turn are influenced by it.

Those publics and the values they represent constitute the environment in which an institution operates. Through environmental scanning we can define the contingencies confronting the organization. It is important that all levels of the organization be engaged in the scanning process to identify contingencies likely to impinge on sub-unit operation. While a university has to deal with the contingencies existing in the environment each sub-unit must make decisions based upon its own analysis of the same environment.

The title of this presenation indicates that each college has made important decisions regarding its organizational structure based upon its interpretation of the environment. That process required considerable study by large numbers of people in order to make effective interpretations and changes. Given the nature of the university,

it is indeed surprising that many who are charged with responsibility for change are so often unwilling to do our homework. The three scenarios we are going to share with you were successful because we did not ignore our homework, and because time was devoted to bringing the greatest number of participants into the process.

Northern Arizona University is the smallest of the three state universities, with 12,500 students. We are located at 7,000 feet elevation, 160 miles from Phoenix, the state capitol and population center. In terrain that looks more like Colorado than most of Arizona, this 80-year-old institution has gone through a pattern of evolution very much like so many others, from normal school to comprehensive university. Because of growth, our tenure percentage of 60% is enviable. There are, nonetheless, departments and programs which, because of their age, have a higher percentage of tenure.

The organizational decline literature is not really applicable here, but organization change literature is. After two years of very slight FTE decline we have experienced a small increase for 1984-85. We are concerned with appropriate response to the environment which will enable us to serve our public more effectively.

The strategic model we use for reacting to the environment is described by Chaffee and Krakower(1) as interpretive. Interpretive strategy emphasizes the importance of communication, symbols, norms, and achieving social legitimacy. To some extent the model we applied is obviously adaptation as well. "'Organizational adaptation' refers to modification and alterations in the organization or its components in order to adjust to change in the external environment... Adaptation generally refers to a process, not an event, whereby changes are instituted in organizations...the emphasis is definitely on responding to some discontinuity or lack of fit that arises between the organization and its environment."(2)

To understand that discontinuity it is necessary to understand the nature of the environment confronting the university and each college within it. Zammuto and Cameron (3) utilize the concepts of ecological niches and organizational domains in

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defining organization environments. Changing niches create conditions for both organizational growth and decline. In order to maintain the organization domain within a niche organizational structure must often be changed.

Daft(4) defines structural dimensions as the internal characteristics of organization. They include formalization, specialization, etc. He also defines contextual dimensions that characterize the whole organization as size, technology and environment. Domains in an organizational environment are depicted as shown in Figure 1.

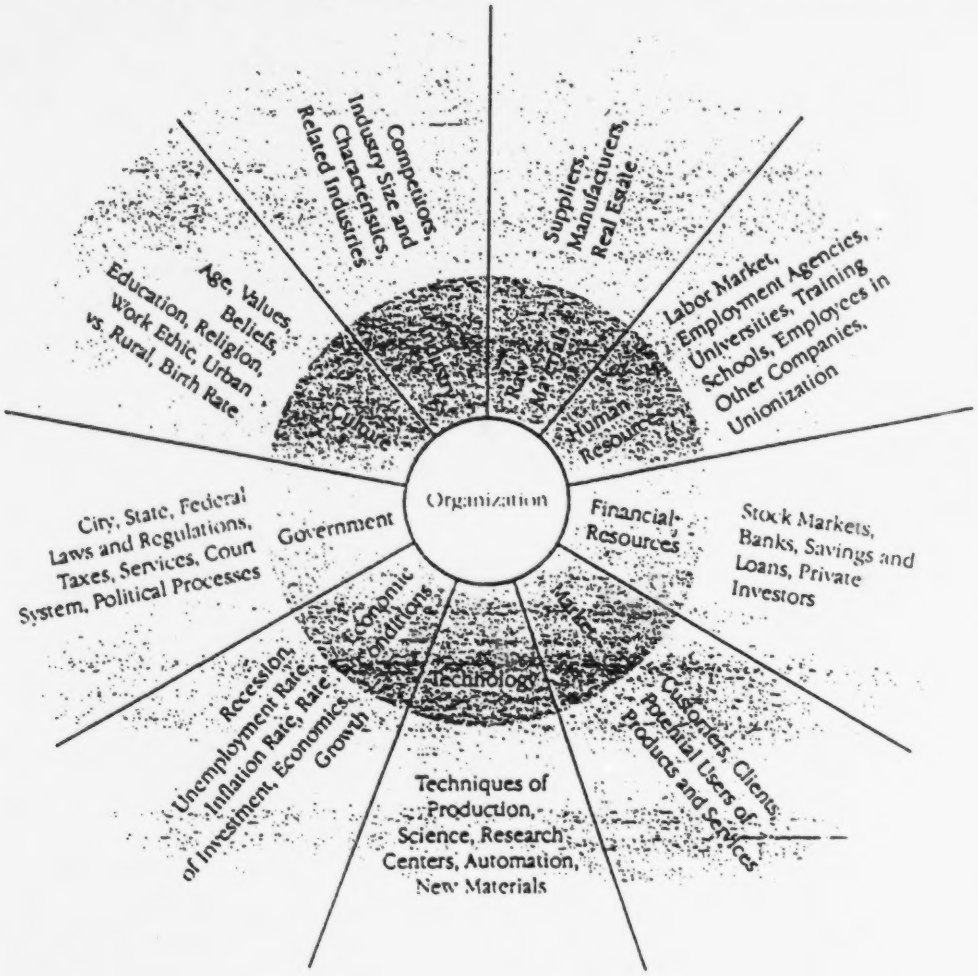

Competitors, Industry Size and Characteristics, Related Industries
Suppliers, Manufacturers, Real Estate
Labor Market, Employment Agencies, Universities, Training Schools, Employees in Other Companies, Unionization
Age, Values, Beliefs, Education, Religion, Work Ethic, Urban vs. Rural, Birth Rate
Culture
Industry
Raw Materials
Human Resources
Organization
City, State, Federal Laws and Regulations, Taxes, Services, Coun System, Political Processes
Government
Financial Resources
Stock Markets, Banks, Savings and Loans, Private Investors
Economic Conditions
Technology
Market
Recession, Unemployment Rate, Inflation Rate, Rate of Investment, Economics, Growth
Techniques of Production, Science, Research Centers, Automation, New Materials
Customers, Clients, Potential Users of Products and Services

Figure 1 Domains in an Organization's Environment. (5)

Emery and Trist (6) and Mintzberg(7) describe the environment as to the extent it is simple or complex, stable or unstable, integrated or diversified, and munificient or

hostile. Using these terms we will describe the environment confronting three colleges and take you through the process we utilized to harness change toward improving our efficiency in the use of resources, both human and fiscal, and as a means of stimulating both faculty and students as we modify the learning environment. While we avoided the trap of assuming that we could use the same design for all three colleges, we did follow the same format for the task. The process was as follows.

Scanning the envrironments, both internal and external, that impacted on the college and university.

Timing: Establishing reasonable goals and time frame.

Process: Involving the maximum number of positive participants, and avoiding unhealthy conflicts.

Approval: Consensus building within the unit and externally for the new direction.

Implementation: The most dangerous time of all. This can be sub-titled, "How to give everything away to those who never supported the idea in the first place."

In the beginning there was environmental scanning, and we'll begin with the college which appears on the surface to have accomplished change by rather traditional approaches. Charles Aurand is the Dean who was responsible.

VARIATION I

THE COLLEGE OF CREATIVE AND COMMUNICATION ARTS

The College of Creative Arts was formed in 1967 at a time when the State was able to fund the necessary resources sufficient to create a new facility to house the fine arts desciplines at Northern Arizona University. During the decade of the sixties, the institution was growing rapidly and there was every reason to believe that the College of Creative Arts would provide for the cultural needs of the main (north) campus as well as those of an existing satellite campus and other satellite campuses that were on the planning schedule for the university. The organizational structure of the university was envisioned to be similar to that of Santa Clara (California) and its clustered campus concept.

During this period of time, the academic leadership on the campus chose to attempt to reduce the size and complexity of the Arts and Sciences College by creating two additional colleges, the College of Creative Arts and the College of Public and Environmental Services. These units were to provide a significant portion of the liberal studies course load normally assumed by the traditional, monolithic, liberal arts unit. These administrative organizational decisions meant that the College of Creative Arts would receive the academic disciplines of Art, Music, Inter-disciplinary Humanities, Religious Studies, Speech Communication, and Journalism, and the College of Public and Environmental Service would provide liberal education support in the areas of American Enterprise, American Studies, Anthropology, Applied Mathematics, Public Planning and Service, Environmental Studies, Geography, History Linguistics, Environmental Science, Georgraphy, History, Linguistics, Environmental Science, Chemistry, Sociology, Political

Science, and the medical related fields of Micro-biology, Medical Technology, Nursing, Dental Hygiene, and Radiological Technology. Complicating this organizational pattern was the fact that Educational Psychology, and health and physical education were grouped under the College of Education.

Hopefully, from this brief historical perspective you are able to derive a feeling for the somewhat atypical structure of the academic units of the university. It was within this structure that for nearly twenty years the areas of Journalism, Telecommunications, and Personal and Public Communication served their respective clientele as separate departments in the College of Creative Arts with little, if any, effective programmatic dialogue taking place between the communication units.

Clearly each of the three communication areas was working virtually independent of the others. Journalism had specialists in writing and law, and Telecommunication possessed its own core of faculty with expertise in broadcast law, and their core of writing specialists. Faculty were effectively compartmentalized and were continuing to work in their narrow field of expertise at a point in history when technological developments were moving their disciplines closer together. The issue then, became one of dealing in a realistic manner with the changes in technology and addressing the impact of these changes on the organizational structure of the communications disciplines.

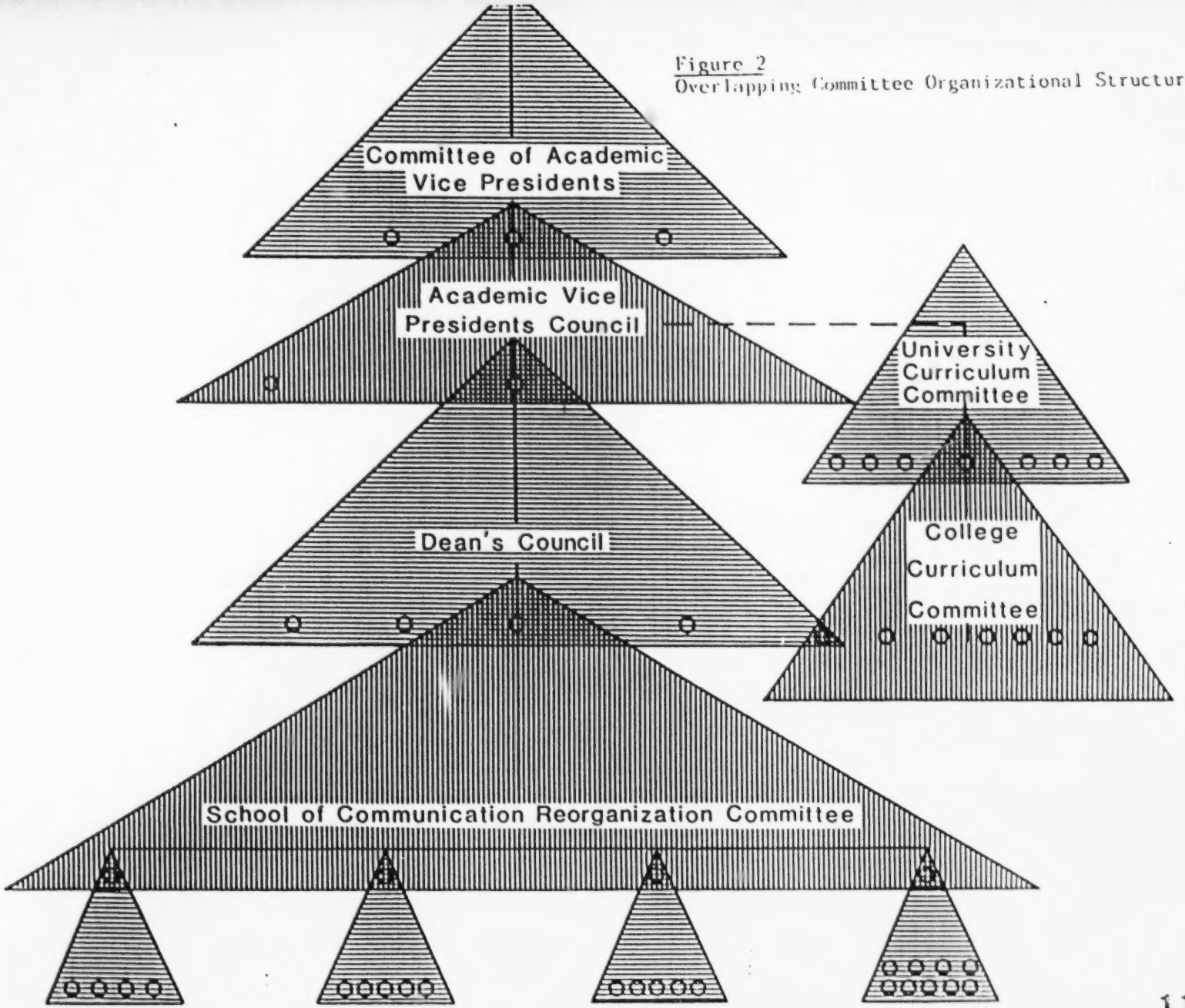
As one looks at the changes that have transpired over the past decade, it is difficult to imagine a more dynamic fast developing academic setting for an academic discipline than found in the area of communication. The domain of journalism, which traditionally has been the print media, is being broadened to include the innovation of electronic journalism, and the media of television has been expanded to bring not only news but also classified advertising into the home. One also finds the electronic media deeply involed in satellite communication and in some instances even offering "hard" copy (printed) information to its customers.

As the technology seemed to be moving the areas of journalism and

telecommunications closer together, the two disciplines found themselves with a common theoretical base. . It was at this time that the impending retirement of one of the department chairmen provided the catalyst that eventually would create the merger of the three communication disciplines in the College. Following the retirement announcement, the Dean and the Academic Vice President, realizing the need to fully involve the faculty in the decison-making process, established an inter-disciplinary committee to examine, consider, and recommend options that would more fully utilize and effctively serve the faculty and students. Using the overlapping committee structure of Rensis Likert[8] based on the principle of supportive relationships, the Dean, with Charimen input, appointed to the committee representatives from each of the academic subdivisions of the College.

The chairman of the committee was selected from the Dean's Council (the department chairmen of the college); and each of the college committee representatives served as the chairman of their department committees. A graphic illustration of the committee structure that evolved is illustrated on the following page.

Figure 2
Overlapping Committee Organizational Structure



This Committee was told that there were no preconceived parameters and that organizational options were totally open. The committe could recommend the present separate department structure, a merger of two of the disciplines, a move to another college, or other alternatives that they felt might be more suitable.

As organizational options were discussed at the sub-area meetings or at the college committee level, the recommendations were communicated through the common committee representatives. Advantages and disadvantages of the various proposals were aired openly and discussed thoroughly at all levels. As debate and dialogue continued, consensus began to build for a school of communication embracing all of the three departments except for the disciplines of Theatre and Dance which were a part of the Speech Communication Department. Keep in mind that Theatre had been an integral part of the Speech Communication Department since its inception in 1967 and faculty relationships were extremely close between the faculty of these two areas and the faculty of telecommunications and personal and public communications. It took considerable courage for the faculty of the personal and public communication area and telecommunications areas to recommend the ouster of some of their closest colleagues in their department. However, they made the decision on the bases of academic curricular relationships and avoided the tendency to involve their personal relationships in the decision making process.

Likert states that when the overlapping group form of organization is employed effectively that it will build loyalty in the group and that the individual is motivated to accept the goals and decisions of the group.[9] As the faculty began to arrive at a consensus, the personnel of three departments accepted the recommendations of the committee and supported unanimously the ultimate decision. Because the overlapping group form of organization was not only used at the department and sub-department levels but also through the college and university committee structure, communication was flowing in both directions throughout the decision making process. The academic

vice president knew of organizational trends as they were being developed, the Dean was aware of the decisions as they were being proposed, and the department chairmen had frequent input into the decision making process. The final result of the deliberation process was the creation of a relatively unique organizational structure that is found in only a few schools of communication across the country; namely the inclusion of personal and public communication, telecommunication, and journalism in a single academic unit. This academic unit, while new, is a part of the college that has continously provided a home for these disciplines.

The organizational structure proposed by the faculty called for a school within a college, a structure not previously found on our campus. This caused some concern and study at the executive level. However, with the full support of the academic vice president, the concept achieved approval last spring on the NAU campus as well as approval by a committee of the three academic vice presidents in the state system and an ultimate blessing by the Arizona Board of Regents.

VARIATION II

THE COLLEGE OF DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The College of Design and Technology is a new academic unit that evolved from the somewhat battered School of Applied Sciences when the environment shifted and the educational mission grew. The unfolding environmental pressures and their impact on Applied Sciences may well represent a microcosm of the relationship between technology and education in the state and nation. The modification in the College's mission and its organization, therefore its approach to blending technological areas with teacher education, may be regarded as unique.

A number of environmental influences affected the School, which was composed of the Departments of Home Economics and Industrial Education and had traditionally focused on the preparation of secondary teachers in the two disciplines. An apparent decline in the placement of secondary teachers was translated into enrollment decreases in the teacher education programs. Concomitantly, increasing employment opportunities in technologically related areas produced a trend toward growing enrollments in industrial supervision (construction, photography and graphic arts and manufacturing technologies) as well as in interior design and fashion merchandising. As a result, the mission of the School shifted and a dual challenge emerged of meeting new educational needs without losing the longterm commitment to the educational programs.

Superimposed were changes within the University. The School was not yet geared up to serve the technological areas adequately, so its overall enrollment was falling. At the same time, the state's economic reversals were transmitted to the University in

funding decreases that shook the fiber of the institution and triggered intense internal evaluations of programs. The University-wide reviewers posed questions about the mission of the School that echoed the growing concerns of the faculty and administration and prompted extensive evaluations of selected areas by the School.

The urgency generated by the financial reverses no doubt accelerated the timeline for change. For at least five years, members of the faculty and administration had discussed the need to update in relation to the changing environment and had taken a few tentative steps. Most talk had been random, however, and most had succumbed to the lethargy of a comfartable faculty. With the publication of the report of the Committee to Review Academic Programs in May of 1983, the faculty was forced to acknowledge the pressing need for change; but the report was negative enough to elicit attitudes of defensiveness that were judged to be counter to objectivity. Hence, it seemed critical to permit some time to lapse in order to foster a realistic perspective in the potential planners. In January of 1984 a faculty Task Force was established and charged with the objective review of the organization, philosphy and direction of the School and with the challenge of finding a creative approach to bring the School back into synergism with the environment.

The process was an egalitarian one that culminated in a faculty generated plan. With strong faculty leadership in a climate of creativity, the Task Force was open to all faculty members, and most participated. The plan that evolved was presented,discussed and ultimately aproved by the general faculty, and all attended the breakfast meeting with the President and vice presidents at which a presentation initiated the approval process.

Firmly based on an overall objective of merging technology and teacher education under a unifying philosophy, the plan called for a format that favored cooperative efforts and incorporated an opportunity for enhanced learning activities that should capture the imagination and enthusiasm of both students and faculty. The departmental organization

was seen as inhibitory to communication and was targeted for discontinuation; the College of Design and Technology would be a non-departmentalized academic unit. Strong degree programs were identified as paramount; most were retained with a commitment for future curricular review. A few were earmarked to be phased out. The teacher education programs were grouped into a common subunit. The technologically based programs would be independent and led by faculty members under a matrix organizational mode. Internships were singled out as critical to the students' orientation to the professional setting and to their transition into employment, and a requirement for internships was included for all programs.

Innovation was most apparent in the proposal for the enhancement experience. An opportunity was provided for an optional experience in product development, a chance for the faculty and students in all of the disciplines to work together to research, design, produce prototypes, market and study useful items. The idea of intergrating interdisciplinary effort to develop products is a historical one dating back to the Bauhaus movement that developed in Germany prior to WW II. When they brought artisans and craftsmen together to address product development jointly, they were able to design and produce aesthetically pleasing objects that were functional as well. The Bauhaus Experience in the new College would demand similar cooperation, thus encourage the application of various concepts to accomplish the finished product. In an age of technological specialization, these students would have the opportunity to intergrate skills and perspective, to communicate with colleagues and to appreciate the necessity for cooperative work in producing viable goods and, perhaps, services. Moreover, those who are future teachers would gain experience in an aspect of development that could become an integral part of their teaching to buttress state curricular guides that call for various exploratory studies such as entrepreneurship. Figure 3 displays The Bauhaus concept as applied to the College of Design and Technology.

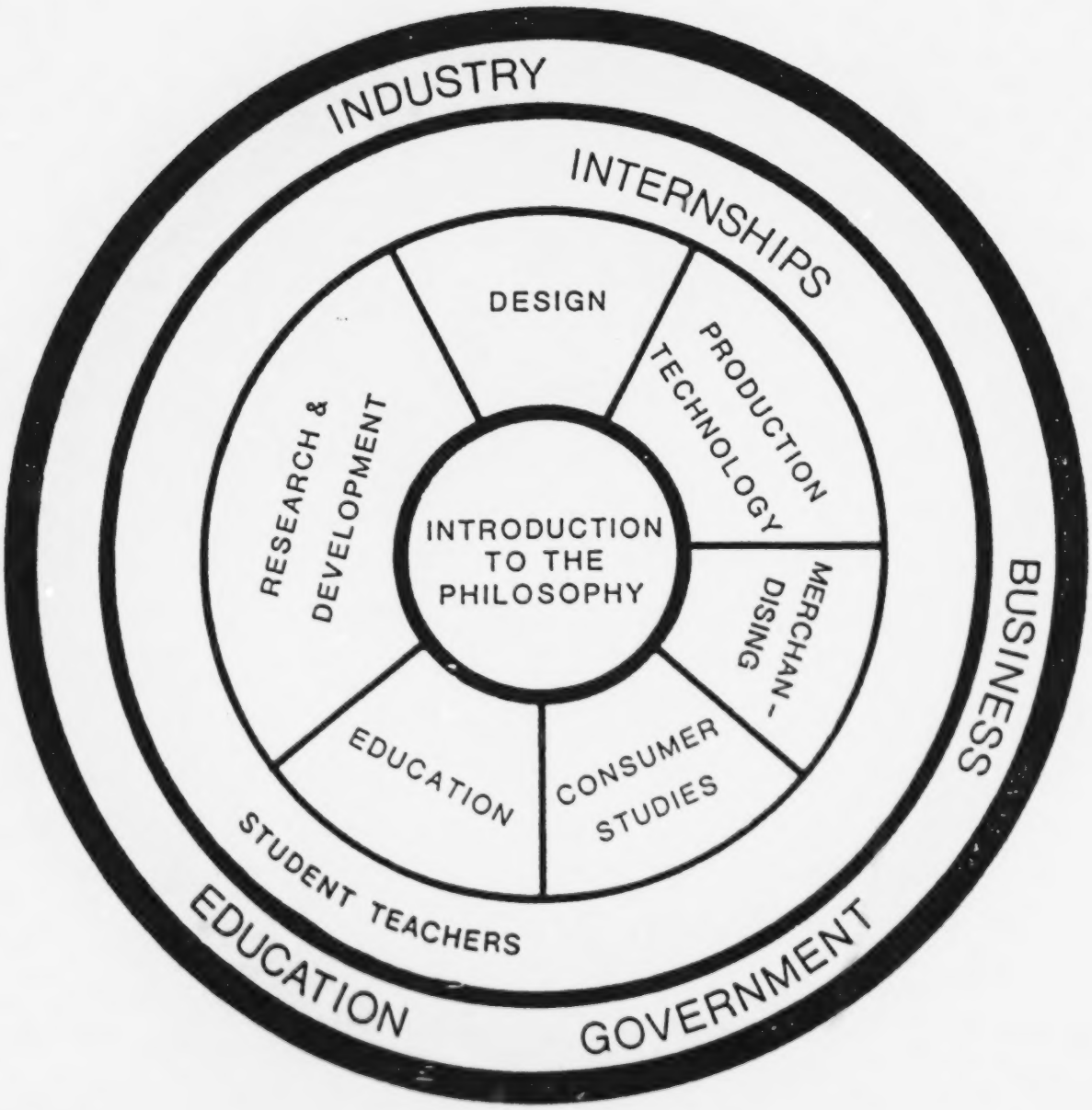


Figure 3

Bauhaus Concept applied to the
College of Design and Technology

In mid-September, the reorganized College of Design and Technology received final approval by the Arizona Board of Regents. Some steps in implementation were completed well in advance of the final nod. After internal approvals were secured, the Task Force was revived and charged with amplifying their plan into an operational one. They defined administrative roles, including a dean, associate dean and area coordinators, and suggested a procedure for selecting interim leaders. Simultaneously, a series of committees addressed the important related necessities of facilities adaptation, equipment changes, and publicity and marketing strategies. The clerical staff was consulted and worked with the administration to plan reorganization according to function, a plan that was implemnted smoothly over the intervening summer. Preliminary contacts were made to apprise colleagues of the impending changes, and publicity vehicles were developed so that students, alumni, University colleagues and statewide couterparts could be brought into the circle of communication upon the final announcement of approval. At present, the interim Associate Dean is in place, and the administrative team is charting future activities to complete the curriculum review and modification, to develop the format for the Bauhaus Experience and to plan its implementation, to set up internships, to adjust facilites and equipment and to plan an increased interface with employers and other constituents.

While it is too early to make a definitive projection as to the outcome, one can foresee some probable impacts. Excitement and pride are already evident amoung most faculty members and many students. A few tentative contacts with industry have uncovered interest in the products that will be developed and have elicited enthusiasm for this University participating in an area that is rarely touched by universities. Employment opportunities should increase for graduates. Programs in both the technological and teaching areas should be strengthened, and eventually students should have a mechanism by which they can explore innovation. Most faculty members should

increase their scholarly activites in applied research and design; one or two may find themselves outside the mainstream and elect to diassociate themselves. Overall, the primary expectation is that an educational value consistent with the environment will be made available to the students of Arizona and other states.

VARIATION III

THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

In the past year several reports have been issued by private and public groups clearly pointing out the need for reform in public education. The three most prominent reports at the national level are the following: (1) A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform by the National Commission on Excellence in Education; (2) Report--on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy by the Twentieth Century Fund; and (3) Action for Excellence by the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth of the Education Commission of the States.

The reports concur on one major point - "There must be substantial change in the present system of educating the nation's young people."

Arizona responded quickly and positively to the recommendations of the national reports. With the close of 1983, Governor Bruce Babbitt issued the final report of the Governor's Committee on Quality Education entitled Education in Arizona, Popular Concerns, Unpopular Choices. The report generally echoes the concerns expressed at the national level but with direct application to Arizona's educational system and specifically to Arizona's teacher training institutions.

By virtue of its historic role in teacher preparation, administrator training, and concern for educational matters across the State of Arizona, Northern Arizona University accepted the challenge for educational reform and proposed the creation of the Center for Excellence in Education.

Northern Arizona University's proposal for the Center for Excellence in Education was approved by the Arizona Board of Regents on February 18, 1984, and the Arizona

State Board of Education on February 27, 1984. In March an Advisory Council was formed to establish needs and in June the Council adopted operational procedures that will be implemented in August of 1984.

The Arizona Legislature funded the Center with an appropriation of one million dollars in addition to the three million dollar budget the University had received for operating the College of Education. The operations of the College of Education are subsumed in the Center.

The purpose of the Center is to involve personnel from the public schools, the university, business and industry, and state agencies in cooperative efforts, based on careful needs assessment, that will facilitate the improvement of education in the state. The Center will provide a structure that will utilize resources, services, and the energy of creative individuals toward the objective of improving teaching preparation programs and ultimately the effectiveness of public schools.

Resources from the liberal arts and all discipline areas within the university are integrated with educational programs to bring about this new directional thrust in teacher preparation. Additionally, the Center would focus on greater unification of pedagogy and subject matter.

The organizational structure of the Center is a teamleadership form, utilizing a managerial style involving a matrix of functional and program units, rather than the standard college/department model. This method of organization is a radical departure from the traditional hierarchial and collegial forms in that it stresses innovation at a raped rate in flexible, changing educational environments. It involves extensive coordination, cooperation, and problem resolution efforts. It is easily adapted as resource demands require. Figure 4 displays the Center Matrix while Figure 5 gives more detail of the administrative hierarchy.

The matrix within the Center is composed of four functional units and an array of program units based on assessed needs. The functional and program units draw heavily on

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

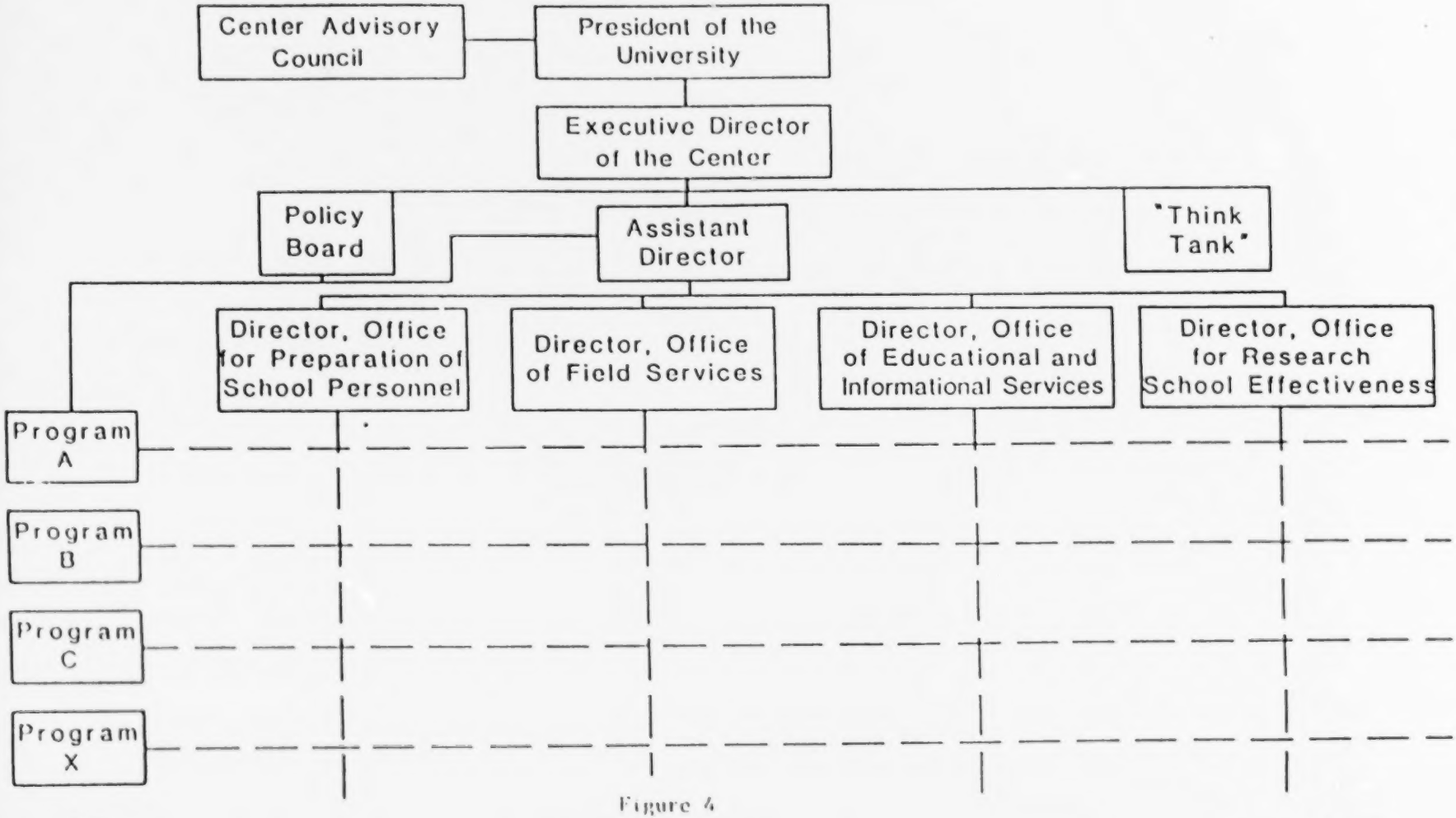
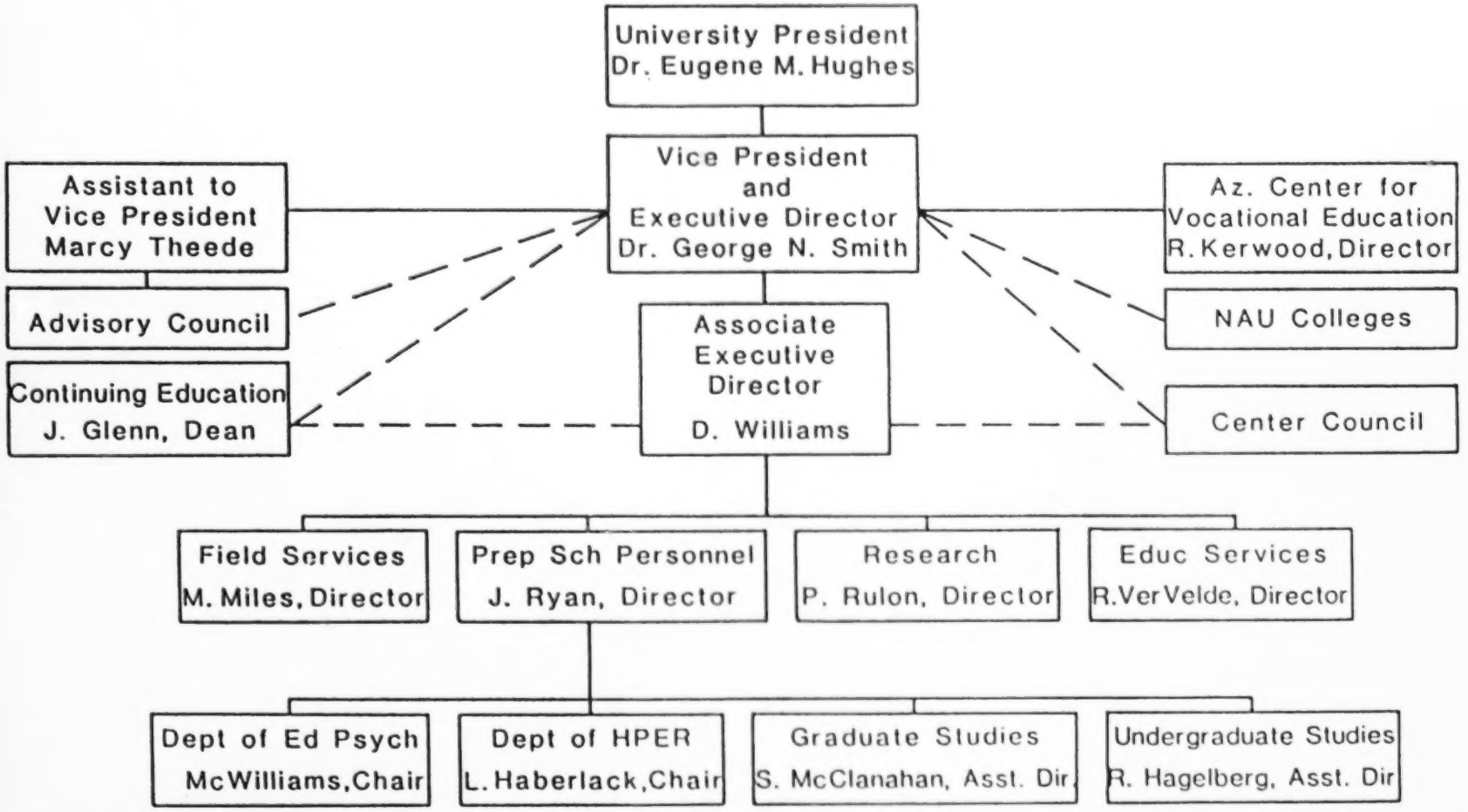


Figure 4

Figure 5

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



all the resources of the university, the public schools, and other state agencies. Functional units are:

A. Research in School Effectiveness

B. Field-based Programs

C. Educational Services

D. Preparation of School Personnel

The Center will work closely with the Governor's Office, Arizona Department of Education, Arizona School Boards Association, Arizona Education Association, Arizona School Administrators, Inc., Arizona State University, University of Arizona, as well as other state agencies, business and industry.

A center for Excellence in Education Council will be established which will consist of representatives from all constituencies listed above. The Council will be instrumental in planning the Center and advisory to its operation.

Proposed Center field sites will be located in the Phoenix metropolitan area, Tucson, Yuma the Colorado River area, Douglas, and the Navajo Reservation. Center field site professionals will work closely with the public schools in a style similar to the original Agricultural Extension Service. The field sites could be officed in community college or public school facilities to enhance coordination of local educational services.

Staffed by prominent teachers, scholars, and administrators selected nationally as well as within Arizona, the Center for Excellence in Education will be based at Northern Arizona University and will work with all colleges, schools, and centers within NAU and the field sites.

Public school teachers will have opportunities to work and study in the Center and its field sites, while university personnel will be able to work in the public schools as teachers of children and as providers of new ideas. Master teachers chosen from the

public schools would hold joint appointments with the Center and their school district. During the school year their classrooms in the schools will provide a laboratory for Center students and professors. During summer sessions they will teach and study on the university campus.

The heart of the Center for Excellence in Education is the extensive involvement of public school, NAU, and the state agency personnel in a cooperative effort to assemble the knowledge and resources needed to bring about a new, dynamic educational environment.

The Arizona Board of Regents has appointed Dr. George Smith, Superintendent of the Mesa Public Schools, Mesa, Arizona as the Executive Director of the Center. Dr. Smith will hold an administrative rank as Vice President of the University.

The Center for Excellence in Education was created out of an environment that could be discribed as complex, unstable, diversified, and somewhat hostile. The Govenor had appointed a task force specifically charged with investigating the colleges of education in the three state universities. However, Northern Arizona University's dramatic proposal to make radical structural change in its College of Education to create the Center for Excellence in Education difused the hostility.

This radical change to a leadership team/matrix structure was designed to decentralize teacher training so that all departments in the University could be involved. It is also designed to encourage a close relationship with public schools in Arizona and to promote involvement of business and industry.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental scanning efforts need to be carried out at all levels within the university. The view from the top is rather general while the view from college and departmental levels is rather specific. The environmental scanning effort then differs in purpose by level within the university.

Decisions regarding structure and changes within a department need to be appropriate for the contingencies in the environment. When the environment is unstable and complex, for example, an organic, decentralized, differentiated structure with extensive planning efforts may be the most effective organizational adaptation.

We have illustrated three colleges adapting in quite different ways to what would be viewed from central administration as a single environment. However, when viewed from the college level we do indeed have a central theme with three variations.

Notes

1. Chaffee, Ellen Earle and Jack Y. Krakower, "Strategy, Performence, and Resource Predictability," Revised July 1984 draft version of a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academic of Management, Boston, August, 1984.

2. Cameron, Kim, "Organizational Adaptation and Higher Education," from Journal of Higher Education, 55 (March/April 1984), 123.

3. Zammuto, Raymond F. and Kim S. Cameron, "Environmental Decline and Organizational Response", Research in Organizational Behavior, 7, (in press) from revised Novermber 1983 draft.

4. Daft, Richard R., Organization Theory and Design. St Paul: West Publishing Company, 1983, 14-17.

5. Daft, 43.

6. Emery, Fred E. and Eric L. Trist, "The Casual Texture of Organizational Environments," Human Relation 18 (1965) 21-32.

7. Mintzberg, H., The Structuring of Organization, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Printice Hall, 1972. 267-269.

8. Likert contends that "management will make full use of the potential capabilities of its human resources only when each person in an organization is a member of one or more effectively functioning groups that have a high degree of group loyalty, effective skills of interaction, and high performance goals." See Rensis Likert, New Patterns of Management, 104.

9. Likert, 105.